

# FIC OVERVIEW

The Foreign Investors Council has reached adulthood in the difficult year of the world pandemic, which also affected Serbia. When it was founded in 2002, it had only 14 members connected by a common intention to actively promote and develop a predictable, competitive and sustainable business environment through open dialogue with the authorities and other important actors in society and the economy. This is the basic task of the Foreign Investors Council, which has remained unchanged during 18 years in which circumstances in the Serbian and world economy have changed significantly, but also the FIC itself in order to better adapt to these changes and engage more effectively in improving the business climate. We can proudly say that we have drastically increased the number of members and their influence in the economy in Serbia since its establishment. Today, the Foreign Investors Council has more than 120 members, who have so far invested over EUR 36 billion in this country and employ more than 100,000 people. As a rule, our members are foreign investors, although there are a number of domestic companies admitted under clearly defined conditions, as well as organizations that play a significant role in the areas we deal with. Our mainstays are: independence, expertise, best international practices, cooperation and support for European integration. The coronavirus pandemic did not disrupt these basic features of the FIC work, but, on the contrary, confirmed their validity.

## FIC IN THE COVID-19 EPIDEMIC

After the outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic, we had no dilemma as to what would be our primary priority. Preserving the health and safety of members, our employees, and society as a whole was second to none. Our office very quickly switched to remote work, while the engagement of employees remained at an extremely high level. Adapting work to the epidemic and protecting employees and their clients was one of the key topics we addressed in the months that followed. At the same time, our members strived to maintain business and employment as much as possible. In this regard, the FIC provided them with selfless support. We have provided fresh information on new regulations and restrictions. We have maintained an active approach and submitted proposals to the Government of Serbia to improve measures to support economy, but also to address the acute problems the economy was facing.

## REORGANIZATION OF THE COMMITTEES

We also had a big change in the FIC last year - a change in the organization of the committees, which has been fore-

seen by the decision from 2019. It is necessary to mention here that the committees are the backbone of the work of the Foreign Investors Council. The committees bring together experts interested in the field in which the committee deals, they are a testing ground for the exchange of knowledge and professional experience: they conduct analyzes of regulations and policies, and draw conclusions and proposals for their improvement. In 2020, we had an important task to change this living and functional system, harmonizing the areas of their work with the topics that we singled out as key for work within the Working Group for Improvement and Implementation of White Book Recommendations with the Government of Serbia. The number of committees has thus been reduced to 8, and this change is expected to increase the efficiency of the committees' work. Following the completion of the reform, which is nearing completion at the time of publication of this text, the Foreign Investors Council has the following committees: Anti-Illicit Trade and Food Committee; Financial Services Committee; Human Resources Committee; Infrastructure and Real Estate Committee; Legal Committee; Pharmaceutical Industry Committee; Tax Committee; Committee on Telecommunications and Digital Economy.

## MAINSTAYS OF WORK OF THE FIC

The world pandemic and the consequences that came along put the basic principles of our work to the test. We are pleased to say that we have passed this test and that they represent the right basis of work and allow for much-needed adjustments and changes.

### Independence

We believe that financial independence and self-sustainability are the best guarantee of what we strive for - to represent the interests of the wider business community. The FIC is supported by membership fees, without external donations and sponsorships. In addition, all members pay the same membership fee, with the exception of the Board of Directors whose membership fee is higher but clearly defined, as is the role of the Board of Directors members in the FIC. Equality of members is achieved through a two-stage decision-making process. The first decision is made within the working committees, with equal participation of interested members without restrictions, and with the aim of reaching an agreement of all by agreement. The Board of Directors of the FIC confirms this decision.

## Expertise

The activities of the FIC are based on the selfless engagement of members, who together form a huge base of knowledge and experience in the domestic and international market in more than 20 sectors in which we deal. The more knowledge and experience we have, the easier it will be to reconcile the interests of different sectors and branches of the economy and find solutions that benefit everyone. The best proof of the breadth of knowledge we have is the White Book in front of you, our trademark. A large number of members are involved in its development, and it is our platform for dialogues with the authorities and other stakeholders. We regularly express our views through position papers, e.g. reports on views, which are prepared by committees and sent to the authorities in order to initiate and enrich the dialogue. We also make expertise available to those interested through a number of projects and other activities, including appearances in the media.

## Best practices

We are convinced that foreign investors bring not only fresh capital to the country, but also other values for society: new technologies, strong corporate rules, business ethics and the concept of sustainability. These are the principles that we nurture in the FIC, so we have adopted and applied through statutory acts which clearly define the rights and obligations of members and officials of the FIC. The FIC also supports Serbia's approach to modern business principles, and has long insisted on the development of digitalization, which has only gained in importance in the context of the coronavirus pandemic.

## Cooperation

Cooperation is a precondition for the success of our initiatives, and our basic way of working. We try to have the most constructive dialogue with the Government of Serbia and regulatory bodies. In that sense, we attach special importance to the Working Group for the improvement

and implementation of the recommendations from the White Book. This body is the official channel of cooperation with the goal of more successfully implementing the recommendations from the White Book, and it is chaired by the Prime Minister of Serbia. However, dialogue with other relevant participants, such as the EU, diplomatic circles, international financial institutions, development agencies, academia, as well as other business and public-private associations, is equally important to us.

## European integration

We wholeheartedly support Serbia's European integration, and not just in words. We advocate the harmonization of Serbian legislation with EU regulations, but we also provide support for negotiations with the EU through dialogue on both sides in the process, expert advice, but also promoting the importance of Serbia's European path. We believe that as an organization we are very competent to support European integration, since 80% of the members come from the EU, while most of the others operate in the European market. It gives us great knowledge and experience that we can transfer, but also the power to see what awaits us as we progress on the path to the EU. Close cooperation with the EU has proved to be of key importance during the current crisis as well, since a response on the broadest possible level is needed to respond to a global crisis.

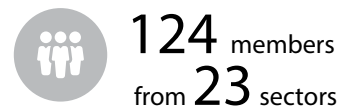
## EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Finally, let us introduce the FIC Executive Office. This is a small team that with its efficiency, knowledge and dedication enables the smooth functioning of the association, easy communication with members and associates of the FIC. The Executive Office is in charge of implementing FIC decisions and contacts with members on a daily basis and represents a very important screw in our complex mechanism.

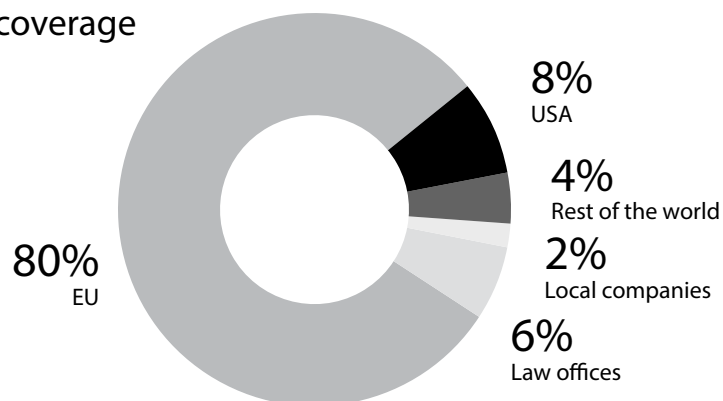
Key characteristics and values of FIC

|                |                      |             |
|----------------|----------------------|-------------|
| Independence   | Regulatory expertise | Consistency |
| Best Practices | EU promotion         | Cooperation |

Key FIC figures



Geo coverage



White Book 2020 in numbers

